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BEFORE

THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF

SOUTH CAROLINA

DOCKET NO. 2004-<u>95</u>-s

IN RE:)	
Application of South Carolina Utilities,)	APPLICATION
Inc. for adjustment of rates and)	
charges for the provision of)	
sewer service.)	
)	

South Carolina Utilities, Inc. ("Applicant" or "Company") would respectfully show unto, and request of, the Commission as follows:

BACKGROUND

- 1. Applicant is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of the State of South Carolina.
- 2. Applicant is a public utility, as defined by S.C. Code Ann. § 58-5-10(3) (Supp. 2003), providing sewer service to the public for compensation in the Gem Lakes Subdivision of the unincorporated area of Aiken County, South Carolina, pursuant to rates approved by the Commission in Order No. 91-886, dated March 27, 1991, in Docket No. 90-550-S.
- 3. All communications or inquiries regarding this Application should be directed as set forth below:
 - a. Applicant's Representative:

Mr. Steven M. Lubertozzi, CPA Director, Regulatory Accounting Utilities, Inc. 2335 Sanders Road Northbrook, Illinois 60062-6196

b. Legal Counsel:

John M. S. Hoefer, Esquire K. Chad Burgess, Esquire Willoughby & Hoefer, P.A. Post Office Box 8416 Columbia, South Carolina 29202-8416 803-252-3300

REQUEST FOR RATE RELIEF

4. Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. §§ 58-5-210 *et seq*. (1976), Applicant requests that the Commission approve the sewer charges set forth in the four (4) page rate schedule attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference as Exhibit "A." As required by S.C. Code Ann. § 58-5-240(A) (Supp. 2003), Applicant has heretofore provided more than thirty (30) days notice of its intent to seek a rate adjustment, said notice being dated January 12, 2004 and on file with the Commission.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- 5. Applicant proposes a test year of January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2003 and has prepared certain financial statements relating to that time period in support of the Application, which statements are attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference as Exhibit "B," pages 1 through 4. These financial statements include the following:
 - a. Balance Sheet (Schedule A)
 - b. Current and pro forma income and expense statements (Schedule B)
- c. Rate base and rate of return information (Schedule C). See note "C" thereto. Applicant also submits, as Exhibit "B" pages 5 through 7, the following information in support of the Application:

- d. Sewer consumption analyses (Schedule D)
- e. Sewer proposed revenues (Schedule E)
- f. Schedule of current and projected customers (Schedule F)
- 6. Attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference as Exhibit "C" is the most recent approval letter from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control ("DHEC").
- 7. Attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference as Exhibit "D" is the Company's current customer bill form.
- 8. There is on file with this Commission a performance bond given to satisfy the requirements of S.C. Code Ann. § 58-5-720 (Supp. 2003).
 - 9. A map depicting Applicant's current service area is on file with the Commission.¹
- 10. The financial statements, the other documents submitted herewith, and the references to documents on file with the Commission are offered to comply with Commission Rules R. 103-512.4 and R. 103-712.4 and to provide information useful to the Commission in considering the reasonableness of the proposed rate schedule.²

NEED AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RATE RELIEF

11. Applicant submits that the proposed rate increase is necessary in order that it may provide reasonable and adequate service to its customers, cover its expenses, and be permitted an

¹As noted above, the Applicant's service area is limited to a single subdivision in the unincorporated area of Aiken County.

²Because Applicant utilizes a composite depreciation rate of 1 ½%, no depreciation schedule by categories of plant or average service lives exists. The Applicant will, of course, make available to Commission Staff during its audit copies of the Company's depreciation workpapers.

opportunity to earn a reasonable return on its investment. As the Commission is aware, Applicant has pending before the Commission in Docket No. 2003-0250-S a petition for approval of an interconnection agreement between Applicant and the City of Aiken by which, *inter alia*, bulk sewer transportation and treatment service would be provided to the Applicant for its authorized sewer service territory. The instant Application is necessitated in order to establish the financial condition of the Company so that the Commission may consider the Company's need for rate relief, which would include a collection only sewer service charge and a pass-through of the bulk service charges levied by the City of Aiken under the contract that is the subject of Docket No.2003-0250-S.

REQUEST FOR RATE BASE TREATMENT

12. Applicant further submits that given its substantial plant investment, and specifically the rate base reflected on Schedule C of Exhibit "B," Applicant is entitled to have the reasonableness of its proposed rates determined in accordance with the rate of return on rate base methodology. Accordingly, Applicant requests rate base treatment in this proceeding.

WHEREFORE, having fully set forth its Application, South Carolina Utilities, Inc. prays that the Commission approve the rates proposed and grant to Applicant such other and further relief as the Commission may deem just and proper.

John M. S. Hoefer K. Chad Burgess

WILLOUGHBY & HOEFER, P.A.

Post Office Box 8416

Columbia, South Carolina 29202-8416

803-252-3300

Attorneys for South Carolina Utilities, Inc.

This 31st day of March, 2004 Columbia, South Carolina

Exhibit "A"SOUTH CAROLINA UTILITIES, INC.

SCHEDULE OF **PROPOSED** RATES AND CHARGES

SEWER

1. Monthly Charges

Charge for Sewage Collection Service Only (All Areas)

Sewage is collected by the Utility and transferred to a government body or agency, or other entity for treatment. The Utility's rates for collection service are as follows:

Residential - monthly charge per single-family house, condominium, mobile home, or apartment unit

\$ 83.90 per unit

Commercial - monthly charge

\$ 83.90 per SFE*

Commercial customers are those not included in the residential category above and include, but are not limited to, hotels, stores, restaurants, offices, industry, etc.

The Utility will also charge for transportation and treatment services provided by the government body or agency or other entity. The rates imposed or charged by the government body or agency or other entity providing treatment will be charged to the Utility's affected customers on a pro rata basis, without markup.

In the case of a landlord/tenant relationship where the tenant is the customer, the Utility may require the landlord to execute an agreement wherein such landlord agrees to be responsible for all charges billed to that premises in accordance with the approved tariffs and the Rules of the Commission, and said account shall be considered the landlord's and tenant's account. In the event the landlord refuses to execute such an agreement, the Utility may not discontinue service to the premises unless and until the tenant becomes delinquent on his account or until the premises are vacated. The Utility may discontinue service pursuant to R.103-535.1 if the account is delinquent or may discontinue service at the time the premises are vacated and the utility shall not be required to furnish service to the premises until the landlord has executed the agreement, and paid any reconnection charges.

1. Non-recurring Charges

A) Sewer service connection charge per SFE*:

\$200.00

(plus any governmental tap, impact or connection charges)

The nonrecurring charges listed above are minimum charges and apply even if the equivalency rating of a non-residential customer is less than one (1). If the equivalency rating of a non-residential customer is greater than one (1), then the proper charge may be obtained by multiplying the equivalency rating by the appropriate fee. These charges apply and are due at the time new service is applied for, or at the time connection to the sewer system is requested.

Where the Utility is required under the terms of a 201/208 Plan or other governmental requirement to interconnect to the sewage system of a government body or agency or other entity and tap/connection/impact fees are imposed by that entity, such tap/connection/impact fees will also be charged to the Utility's affected customers on a pro rata basis, without markup.

2. Notification, Account Set-Up and Reconnection Charges

- a. Customer Account Charge: A fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) shall be charged as a one-time fee to defray the costs of initiating service. This charge will be waived if the customer also takes water service.
- b. Reconnection Charges: In addition to any other charges that may be due, a reconnection fee of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) shall be due prior to the Utility reconnecting service which has been disconnected for any reason set forth in Commission Rule R.103-532.4. The amount of the reconnection fee shall be in accordance with R.103-532.4. and shall be changed to conform with said rule as the rule is amended from time to time.
- c. Notification Fee: A fee of four dollars (\$4.00) shall be charged each customer to whom the Utility mails the notice as required by Commission Rule R. 103-535.1 prior to service being discontinued. This fee assesses a portion of the clerical and mailing costs of such notices to the customers creating the cost.

4. Billing Cycle

Recurring charges will be billed bimonthly in arrears. Non-recurring charges will be billed and collected in advance of service being provided.

5. Late Payment Charges

Any balance unpaid within twenty-five (25) days of the billing date shall be assessed a late payment charge of one and one-half percent (1 1/2 %) for each month, or any part of a month, that said payment is late.

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6. Tax Multiplier

Except as otherwise provided by contract approved by South Carolina Public Service Commission, amounts paid or transferred to the utility by customers, builders, developers or others, either in the form of cash or property, shall be increased by a cash payment in an amount equal to the income taxes owed on the cash or property transferred to the utility by customers, builders, developers, or others and properly classified as a contribution or advance in aid of construction in accordance with the Uniform System of Accounts. Included in this classification are water service connection charges and plant impact fees.

7. Toxic and Pretreatment Effluent Guidelines

The Utility will not accept or treat any substance or material that has not been defined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") or the South Carolina Department of Environmental Control ("DHEC") as a toxic pollutant, hazardous waste, or hazardous substance, including pollutants falling within the provisions of 40 CFR 129.4 and 401.15. Additionally, pollutants or pollutant properties subject to 40 CFR 403.5 and 403.6 are to be processed according to pretreatment standards applicable to such pollutants or pollutant properties, and such standards constitute the Utility's minimum pretreatment standards. Any person or entity introducing any such prohibited or untreated materials into the Company's sewer system may have service interrupted without notice until such discharges cease, and shall be liable to the utility for all damages and costs, including reasonable attorney's fees, incurred by the utility as a result thereof.

8. Construction Standards

The Utility requires all construction to be performed in accordance with generally accepted engineering standards, at a minimum. The Utility from time to time may require that more stringent construction standards be followed.

9. Extension of Utility Service Lines and Mains

The Utility shall have no obligation at its expense to extend its utility service lines or mains in order to permit any customer to connect to its water. However, anyone or entity which is willing to pay all costs associated with extending an appropriately sized and constructed main or utility service line from his/her/its premises to any appropriate connection point, pay the appropriate fees and charges as set forth in this rate schedule, and comply with the guidelines and standards hereof, shall not be denied service.

PAGE 4

In no event will the Utility be required to construct additional wastewater treatment capacity to serve any customer or entity without an agreement acceptable to the Utility first having been reached for the payment of all costs associated with adding wastewater treatment capacity to the affected sewer system.

* A Single Family Equivalent (SFE) shall be determined by using the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Guidelines for Unit Contributory Loading for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Facilities – 25 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 61-67 Appendix A (2003 Supp.) Where applicable, such guidelines shall be used for determination of the appropriate monthly service and tap fee.

em Lakes)		
Inc. (Ge		
South Carolina Utilities,	BALANCE SHEET	December 31, 2003

Schedule A

	December 31, 2003	500	
		LIABILITIES AND OTHER CREDITS	
Service	\$ 615,690	Capital Stock and Retained Earnings	
	\$ 615,690	Common Stock and Paid In Capital Retained Earnings	\$ 288,818 (346,216)
Accumulated Depreciation-Sewer	(135,836)	Total	\$ (57,398)
	\$ (135,836)	Current and Accrued Liabilities Accounts Payable-Trade	1,230
Net Utility Plant	\$ 479,854	Customer Deposits Customer Deposits - Interest A/P - Assoc. Companies	7,798 2,855 2,859 403,588
Plant Acquisition Adjustment-Sewer	0	Total	\$ 418,329
	\$	Advances In Aid of Construction Sewer	0
Construction Work In Process-Sewer	0	Total	٠ O
	\$	Contributions In Aid of Construction	Č
		1	32,011
casn Accounts Receivable - Net Other Current Assets	0 15,101 0	Total	\$ 32,011
	\$ 15,101	Unamortized ITC AccDeferred Tax - Federal Deferred Tax - State	0 102,780 (767)
Deferred Charges	0	F	
	\$ 494,956	וכנמו	\$ 102,013
		TOTAL LIABILITIES AND OTHER CREDITS	\$ 494,956

Exhibit "B" Page 1 of 7

South Carolina Utilities, Inc. (Gem Lakes) Sewer Operations

Test Year Ended December 31, 2003

Test Year Ended December 31, 2003	Per Books	Pro Forma Adjustments		Pro Forma Present		Proposed Increase			Pro Forma Proposed
Operating Revenues									
Service Revenues - Water									
Service Revenues - Sewer	\$ 87,190	\$ -		\$ 87,190	\$	223,072	[a]	\$	310,262
Miscellaneous Revenues	(252)			(252)					(252)
Uncollectible Accounts	(246)		•	(246)		(629)	[b]		(875)
Total Operating Revenues	86,692	0		86,692		222,443			309,134
Maintenance Expenses									
Salaries and Wages	4,877	3,881	[c]	8,758		0			8,758
Purchased Power	15,127	(13,615)	[k]	1,513		0			1,513
Purchased Sewer & Water	0			. 0					0
Maintenance and Repair	16,325	(5,440)	[k]	10,885					10,885
Maintenance Testing	4,871	(-,,	2	4,871		0			4,871
Meter Reading	0			0		·			4,6/1
Chemicals	0			0		0			0
Transportation	1,377			1,377		0			-
Operating Exp. Charged to Plant	(18,367)	18,367	[]]	1,3//		0			1,377
Outside Services - Other	90,052	10,307	[1]	90,052		0			0
outside pervices - Other	90,032			90,052		0			90,052
Total	114,263	3,193		117,455	-	0			117,455
General Expenses									
Salaries and Wages	6,326	4,112	[c]	10,438		0			10,438
Office Supplies & Other Office Exp.	10,152	0		10,152		0			10,152
Regulatory Commission Exp.	0	20,725	[d]	20,725		0			20,725
Pension & Other Benefits	2,292	183	[c]	2,475		0			2,475
Rent	0			0		0			0
Insurance	1,119			1,119		0			1,119
Office Utilities	1,025			1,025		0			1,025
Miscellaneous	1,518			1,518		0			1,518
Total	22,431	25,020		47,451		0			47,451
Depreciation	12,170	43,372	[f]	55,542					55,542
Taxes Other Than Income	9,831	(1)	[g]	9,830		669	[g]		10,499
Income Taxes - Federal	(45,973)	(9,549)	[h]	(55, 522)			[h]		16,111
Income Taxes - State	(6)	(8,589)		(8,595)			[h]		2,494
Amortization of CIAC	(737)	42		(696)			()	_	(696)
Total	(24,715)	25,275		559		83,391			83,950
Total Operating Expenses	111,979	53,487		165,466		83,391			248,857
Net Operating Income	\$ (25,287)	\$ (53,487)		\$ (78,774)	\$	139,052		\$	60,278
Interest During Construction	0	0	[i]	0		0			0
Interest on Debt	17,502	11,502	[;]	29,004		0			29,004
Net Income	\$ (42,789)	\$ (64,989)		\$ (107,778)	.\$	139,052		\$	31,274

- [a] Revenues are annualized at proposed rates using the average test year customers.
- [b] Uncollectible Accounts are adjusted based on the percentage of uncollectible accounts to revenues in the test year applied to pro forma proposed revenues.
- [c] Salaries, Wages and Benefits are adjusted to annualize as of 12/31/03.
- [d] Regulatory Commission Expense has been adjusted to reflect the cost of the current rate case over 3 years.
- [f] Depreciation and Amortization Expense are annualized; Includes extraordinary depreciation for retirement of plant.
- [g] Taxes Other than Income is adjusted for annualized payroll taxes, Utility Commission Taxes, and Gross Receipts Taxes.
- [h] Income Taxes are computed on taxable income at current rates.
- [i] AFUDC is eliminated for rate making purposes.
- [j] Interest on Debt has been computed using a 59.23% / 40.77% debt / equity ratio and a 7.28% cost of debt.
- [k] Adjustments are a result of decreasing expenses associated with discontinuing operation of wastewater treatment plant
- [1] Operator capitalized time

South Carolina Utilities, Inc. (Gem Lakes)

Sewer Operations

Rate Base and Rate of Return Test Year Ended December 31, 2003 Schedule C Page 1 of 1

Test Tear Ended December 31, 2003					
	Per Books	Pro Forma Adjustments	As Adjusted	Proposed Increase	Effect of Proposed Increase
Net Operating Income	(25,287)	(53,487)	(78,774)	139,052	60,278
Gross Plant In Service	\$ 615,690		615,690	0	615,690
Accumulated Depreciation	(135,836)	(3,011)	(138,847)	0	(138,847)
Net Plant In Service	479,854	(3,011)	476,843	0	476,843
Cash Working Capital	18,316	3,526 [a]	21,842	0	21,842
Contributions In Aid of Construction	(32,011)	0	(32,011)	0	(32,011)
Accumulated Deferred Income Taxes	(102,013)	0	(102,013)	0	(102,013)
Customer Deposits	(2,855)	0	(2,855)	0	(2,855)
Plant Acquisition Adjustment	0	0	0	0	0
Water Service Corporation	10,121	0	10,121	0	10,121
Pro Forma Plant	0	301,081 [b]	301,081	0	301,081
Total Rate Base	\$ <u>371,412</u> \$	301,596 \$	673,008 \$	0	\$ 673,008
Return on Rate Base	-6.81%		-11.70%		8.96%

[[]a] Working Capital is calculated based on pro forma expenses.

Plant by Categories:

12/31/00

3011001	ORGANIZATION	-
3033020	LAND & LAND RIGHTS (Pump Pit)	-
3036010	LAND & LAND RIGHTS	-
3042011	STRUCTURES & IMPROVE.(Sourc Sup)	-
3043021	STRUCTURES & IMPROVE.(PUMP.PLT.)	-
3044031	STRUCTURES & IMPROVE.(WTR. T.P.)	-
3072014	WELLS & SPRINGS	-
3113025	ELECTRIC PUMPING EQUIPMENT	-
3204032	WATER TREATMENT EQUIPMENT	-
3305042	DISTRIB. RESERVOIRS & STANDPIPES	-
3315043	TRANSMISSION & DISTRIB, MAINS	-
3335045	SERVICE LINES	-
3345046	METERS	-
3345047	METER INSTALLATIONS	-
3355048	HYDRANTS	-
3391088	UNIFORMS	\$ -
3406090	OFFICE STRUCTURES & IMPROVEMENTS	-
3406091	OFFICE FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT	-
3446095	LABORATORY EQUIPMENT	-
3466094	TOOLS, SHOP & MISC. EQUIPMENT	-
3466097	COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT	-
	Sub-Total	•
	Sub-Total	\$ -
3537002	LAND & LAND RIGHTS	1,653
3542011	LIFT STATION	554
3547003	BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES	3,047
3547012	SPRAY IRRIGATION FACILITIES	304,539
3602006	SEWAGE SERVICE LINES	24,089
3602007	FORCE OR VACUUM MAINS	751
3612008	SEWER MAINS	108,254
3612010	MANHOLES	2,704
3804004	SEWER LAGOONS	3,857
3804005	SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT	164,506
3917000	Transportation	-
3406010	Mainframe Computer	-
	Total Plant	\$ 615,259

[[]b] Pro Forma Plant is adjusted for planned additional capital investments to interconnect with Aiken.

[[]c] The Return on Rate Base shown above is provided solely as a matter of information and convenience for the Commission and is not intended to reflect a request for this specific return on rate base (or any return on equity). Applicant will make its request for a return on rate base (and return on equity) by way of evidence to be introduced at hearing.

South Carolina Utilities, Inc. (G. Lakes)
Consumption Analysis 1/1/03 - 12/31/03
TEST YEAR / PRESENT REVENUES

SEWER								
Bill code		Gallonage	Usage Charge	Units		Rate	R	evenues
All Subs:								
	Residential			3,698	\$	23.50	\$	86,903
				0	\$	_	\$	· <u>-</u>
				0	\$	-	\$	_
				0	\$	<u>-</u>	\$	-
	Total			3,698			\$	86,903
					per t	/b	\$	87,190
					diffe	rence \$	\$	(287)
					diffe	rence %		-0.33%

SEWER							
Bill code		Gallonage	Usage Charge	Units	Rate	R	evenues
All Subs:				Units	Rate	R	evenues
	Residential			3,698	83.90	\$	310,262
	Total			3,698		\$	310,262

South Carolina Utilities, Inc. (Gem Lakes)

Schedule F

	Current Customers	Projected Customers
Sewer	308	308

BOARD: Elizabeth M. Hagood Chairman Mark B. Kent Vice Chairman Howard L. Brilliant, MD



C. Earl Hunter, Commissioner
Promoting and protecting the health of the public and the environment.

BOARD: Carl L. Brazell

Louisiana W. Wright

L. Michael Blackmon

Coleman F. Buckhouse, MD

March 23, 2004

Mr. John M.S. Hoefer Willoughby & Hoefer PO Box 8416 Columbia, SC 29202-8416

RE:

Your letter of March 18, 2004

S.C. Utilities (Gem Lakes S/D)

ND0066893

Dear Mr. Hoefer:

This letter confirms that the referenced utility has a valid wastewater operating and discharge permit. The plant is authorized to land apply treated wastewater at a rate not to exceed 100,000 gpd.

I can be reached at 803-898-4157 or at debessjp@dhec.sc.gov.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey P. deBessonet, P.E., Director Water Facilities Permitting Division

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Willoughby & Hoefer, P.A.

Exhibit "C" Page 1 of 1

Utilities, Inc and Affiliated Companies

SOUTH CAROLINA UTILITIES INC PO BOX 4539 WEST COLUMBIA SC 29171-4539



Acct # **Due Date** Please Pay \$47.00

հոհվեկուս Միուհումի հոհեկումի հիրկով SOUTH CAROLINA UTILITIES INC PO BOX 4539 WEST COLUMBIA SC 29171-4539

Please return this portion with your payment.

Customer Service Information Please Retain for Your Records
Remittance Address: For Service or Billing Inquiries C.
SOUTH CAROLINA UTILITIES INC 803-796-9545 OR 800-367-4314

PO BOX 4539

To Pay By Credit or Debit Card, Call 1-877-527-7852. A Convenience Fee Will Be Charged. WEST COLUMBIA SC 29171-4539 Account Information

Description of Charges Account # PRIOR BALANCE \$0.00 Service Addr. SEWER \$47.00 02/27/04 **Due Date** Bill Date 03/23/04

Prior Read 01/01/04 0 Current Read 02/29/04 0

Usage 0 # of days this period 59 Average daily usage 0 Average daily water cost \$0.00 Average daily sewer cost \$0.80 Last Payment \$47.00

1 1/2% PER MONTH WILL BE ADDED TO ALL AMOUNTS NOT PAID BY THE DUE DATE

\$47.00

IN THE EVENT OF A SEWER BLOCKAGE, PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE BEFORE YOU CALL A PLUMBER. 803-796-9545 OR 1-800-367-4314 OUR EXPERIENCED OPERATIONS STAFF IS ON CALL 7 DAYS A WEEK/24 HOURS A DAY TO RESPOND TO YOUR CONCERNS. *******

TO HELP US MAINTAIN SECURITY SURROUNDING YOUR DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS, PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE AND THE POLICE IF YOU NOTICE SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY. ********************

PAYMENT OPTIONS

*** AVOID PAYING FEES TO ONLINE BILL PAYMENT CENTERS WE CAN AUTOMATICALY DRAFT YOUR PAYMENT FROM YOUR SAVINGS OR CHECKING ACCOUNT FREE OF CHARGE. CALL OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT FOR DETAILS. TO PAY BY VISA, MASTERCARD OR DEBIT CARD, CALL 1-877-527-7852. IN ADDITION, YOU MAY PAY OVER THE INTERNET BY ACCESSING PAYBYINTERNET.COM. YOU MUST INDICATE THAT YOU ARE MAKING PAYMENT TO UTILITIES, INC. OVER THE INTERNET. A CONVENIENCE FEE WILL BE CHARGED FOR CREDIT CARD AND INTERNET PAYMENTS.

Rate Schedule Available Upon Request

Exhibit "D" Page 1 of 1